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Dated: August 24, 2004

Signature: Joseph W. Ragusa
(Joseph W. Ragusa)

Docket No.: J2167.0166

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re Patent Application of:
Joseph Gendler

Application No.: 09/705,486

Confirmation No.: 7644

Filed: November 3, 2000

Art Unit: 3623

For: SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR
AUTOMATED FINANCIAL PROJECT
MANAGEMENT

Examiner: E. Shaffer

APPELLANT'S BRIEF

Mail Stop Appeal Brief – Patents
Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Dear Sir:

This brief is in furtherance of the Notice of Appeal, filed in this case on May 24, 2004.

You are hereby authorized to charge our credit card for the fee of \$330.00 required under Section 1.17(f). PTO Form 2038 is attached.

In the event a fee is required or if any additional fee during the prosecution of this application is not paid, the Patent Office is authorized to charge any underpayment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 50-2215.

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CONTINGENT EXTENSION REQUEST

If this communication is filed after the shortened statutory time period had elapsed and no separate Petition is enclosed, the Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks is petitioned, under 37 CFR 1.136(a), to extend the time for filing this and any accompanying papers by the number of months which will avoid abandonment under 37 CFR 1.135. The fee under 37 CFR 1.17 should be charged to our Deposit Account No. 50-2215.

This brief is transmitted in triplicate.

This brief contains items under the following headings as required by 37 C.F.R. § 1.192 and M.P.E.P. § 1206:

- I. Real Party In Interest
- II Related Appeals and Interferences
- III. Status of Claims
- IV. Status of Amendments
- V. Summary of Invention
- VI. Issues
- VII. Grouping of Claims
- VIII. Arguments
- IX. Claims Involved in the Appeal
- Appendix A Claims

I. REAL PARTY IN INTEREST

The real party in interest for this appeal is:

JPMORGAN CHASE BANK

II. RELATED APPEALS AND INTERFERENCES

There are no other appeals or interferences which will directly affect or be directly affected by or have a bearing on the Board's decision in this appeal.

III. STATUS OF CLAIMS

A. Total Number of Claims in Application

There are 67 claims pending in application.

B. Current Status of Claims

1. Claims canceled: None
2. Claims withdrawn from consideration but not canceled: None
3. Claims pending: 1-67.
4. Claims allowed: None.
5. Claims rejected: 1-67.
6. Claims objected to: None.

C. Claims On Appeal

The claims on appeal are rejected claims 1-67.

IV. STATUS OF AMENDMENTS

Appellants filed a Response After Final Rejection on May 24, 2004. The Examiner responded to the Response After Final Rejection in an Advisory Action mailed June 21, 2004. In the Advisory Action, the Examiner indicated that the After Final Request for Reconsideration was considered but deemed not to place the Application in condition for allowance. The claims in Appendix A incorporate all of Appellants' amendments filed prior to the June 21, 2004, Advisory Action. It is noted that no amendments have been made to the text of any originally-filed claim. The only "amendments" have consisted of a renumbering of claims brought upon by the fact that the original specification contained two claims 57. The amendments simply corrected this numbering, without affecting the text in any way.

V. SUMMARY OF INVENTION

The present invention relates to automation of the creation, processing and approval cycles of numerous documents involved in project management. It allows project initiation and funding approval by clients throughout the corporation via a desktop browser coupled to a corporate Intranet. (Specification at page 4, lines 10-15.) The present system provides automatic forwarding of a notice for a request for approval (RFA) of a document to a reviewer in an approval hierarchy. If the approver approves the RFA, the electronic RFA is sent to the next individual in the approval hierarchy. (See, e.g., specification at page 14, line 7 through page 15, line 21.)

VI. ISSUES

Are claims 1-67 patentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,161,113 (“Mora et al.”), alone or in combination with U.S. Patent No. 6,167,378 (“Webber, Jr.”)? In particular, are the independent claims anticipated by Mora et al?

VII. GROUPING OF CLAIMS

For purposes of this appeal brief only, and without conceding the teachings of any prior art reference, the claims have been grouped as indicated below:

Group Claim(s)

I. 1-67

In Section VIII below, Appellants have included arguments supporting the patentability of Group I as required by M.P.E.P. § 1206.

VIII. ARGUMENTS

I. Are the Group I claims patentable over Mora et al?

In the Final Office Action dated November 25, 2003 (the “Final Office Action”), the Examiner issued a final rejection of claims 1-5, 7-15, 17-29, 35-50, 52-64, 66 and 67 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent 6,161,113 (hereinafter “Mora et al.”). This rejection covers all of the independent claims, namely, claims 1, 35 and 36. However, the Mora et al. reference fails to

disclose Appellants' claimed invention. Claims 6, 16, 30-34, 51 and 65 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious from Mora et al. in view of U.S. Patent 6,167,378 (hereinafter "Webber et al."). This combination of references was not applied to any of the independent claims.

A. Anticipation

With regard to the Section 102 rejection, Appellants submit that this rejection is improper because the Examiner failed to establish a *prima facie* case of anticipation based upon the Mora et al. reference.

To anticipate a claim under 35 U.S.C. § 102, the cited reference must disclose every element of the claim, as arranged in the claim, and in sufficient detail to enable one skilled in the art to make and use the anticipated subject matter. See PPG Industries, Inc. v. Guardian Industries Corp., 75 F.3d 1558, 1566 (Fed. Cir. 1996); C.R. Bard, Inc. v. M3 Sys., Inc., 157 F.3d 1340, 1349 (Fed. Cir. 1998); MPEP § 2131, citing Verdegaal Bros. v. Union Oil Co. of California, 814 F.2d 628, 631, 2 USPQ2d 1051, 1053 (Fed. Cir. 1987) ("A claim is anticipated only if each and every element as set forth in the claim is found, either expressly or inherently described, in a single prior art reference."). A reference that does not expressly disclose all of the elements of a claimed invention cannot anticipate unless all of the undisclosed elements are inherently present in the reference. See Continental Can Co. USA v. Monsanto Co., 942 F.2d 1264, 1268 (Fed. Cir. 1991). "The identical invention must be shown in as complete detail as is contained in the . . . claim." Richardson v. Suzuki Motor Co., 868 F.2d 1226, 1236, 9 USPQ2d 1913, 1920 (Fed. Cir. 1989).

Claim 1 explicitly recites

generating at least one electronic document associated with the project;
identifying entities that comprise an approval hierarchy; and
automatically forwarding a notice requesting approval of the at least one electronic document to a successive one of the entities in the approval hierarchy upon approval of the at least one electronic document by a previous entity in the approval hierarchy.

Similarly, claim 35 recites:

generating at least one electronic document associated with the project;
identifying entities that comprise an approval hierarchy;
automatically forwarding a notice requesting approval of the at least one electronic document to a successive one of the entities in the approval hierarchy upon approval of the at least one electronic document by a previous entity in the approval hierarchy.

Similarly, claim 36 recites:

at least one client workstation coupled to the network, wherein the at least one client workstation is used to identify entities that comprise an approval hierarchy;
a database server coupled to the network, the database server containing at least one electronic document associated with the project;
a workflow server coupled to the network wherein the workflow server automatically forwards a notice requesting approval of the at least one electronic document to a successive one of the entities in the approval hierarchy upon approval of the at least one electronic document by a previous entity in the approval hierarchy.

Appellants' claimed invention generates at least one electronic document, identifies entities that comprise an approval hierarchy, and automatically forwards a notice requesting approval of the (very same) at least one electronic document to a successive one of the entities in the approval hierarchy upon approval of the at least one electronic document by a previous entity in the approval hierarchy.

In the Final Office Action, the Examiner did not identify structure in the prior art that meets every limitation of the independent claims and for at least this reason failed to set forth a prima facie case of anticipation.

At page 3, lines 11-15 of the Final Office Action, in attempting to establish a correspondence between Mora et al. and the limitation in independent claim 1 of "identifying entities that comprise an approval hierarchy," (substantially similar recitations appear in the other independent claims) the Examiner relied upon Mora et al.'s col. 10, lines 1-2, col. 10, lines 52-53, col. 12, lines 23-24 and col. 13, lines 9-10. These portions of Mora et al. were characterized in the Final Office Action as "disclos[ing] four levels of approvals as 'Authorization to Proceed -- this document records the senior executive review of approval to continue with the project.'"

However, the cited portions of Mora et al. do not disclose an approval hierarchy at all. Rather, to the extent approval is referred to at all, each cited portion relates to the *same* level of approval, namely "senior executive review," of four different *phases* of a project. That is, at col. 10, lines 1-2, senior executive review is recorded as to the planning phase of a project. At col. 10, lines 52-53, senior executive review (presumably, the same senior executive) is recorded as to the

preliminary design phase of a project. At col. 12, lines 23-24 senior executive review (again, the same senior executive) is recorded as to the design, build and test phases of a project and at col. 13, lines 9-10, senior executive review (once again, the same senior executive) is recorded as to the install and support phases of a project.

As can be seen by the foregoing, there is no *hierarchy of approval* taught in these portions of Mora et al. In fact, since the entity in Mora et al. never changes, no hierarchical structure is taught or suggested in these portions of Mora et al. relating to approval. Rather, what changes in the cited portions of Mora et al. is the *phase of the project*. For at least this reason, the cited portions of Mora et al. cannot be said to teach this feature of independent claim 1, which feature also appears in each of the other independent claims.

Since the failure to meet any feature of a claim precludes the finding of anticipation, no prima facie case was established for anticipation for any independent claim and for this reason alone, all of the independent claims are believed clearly allowable over the cited reference.

The Office Action does not, in any event, carry over the correspondence set forth in examining the identifying step when it moves on to examining the automatically forwarding step. That is, in attempting to establish a correspondence between structure in Mora et al. and the automatic forwarding limitation, the Examiner appears to rely on different structure in Mora et al. as allegedly corresponding to the very same “entities that comprise an approval hierarchy.” Since those terms are presumed to mean the same thing wherever they occur

throughout the claim, it is entirely improper to apply a first structure to meet those terms in examining the identifying step and a second structure to meet the very same terms in examining the automatically forwarding step. But this is exactly what was done in the Office Action.

Each of the independent claims further require automatically forwarding “a notice requesting approval of the at least one electronic document to a successive one of the entities in the approval hierarchy upon approval of the at least one electronic document by a previous entity in the approval hierarchy.” At pages 3-4 of the Office Action, in examining this limitation (referred to hereinafter as the “automatic forwarding limitation,”) the Examiner relies upon Mora et al. at col. 59, lines 41-45. With regard to this portion of Mora et al., which is claim 6 of Mora et al., the Final Office Action states, at pages 3-4: “[f]orwarding a non-ratified contract that is to be approved through an approval hierarchy is anticipated by Mora et al., which discloses ‘programming for a display that prompts a user to enter a request for signatures for a document and that generates a signature request document in response to said request for approval.’”

However, this language from Mora et al.’s claim 6 makes no reference to the claimed approval hierarchy, or to any hierarchy of approval. It only states that approval is being requested.

Further, in order to be consistent with the previous application of Mora et al. to the identifying step would require that the approval hierarchy be “senior executive review,” which, as discussed above, involved no hierarchy of approval whatsoever.

In any event, claim 6 of Mora et al. neither teaches nor suggests the recited automatic forwarding of a notice once a previous entity in the approval hierarchy has approved the electronic document.

For at least the foregoing additional reasons, no prima facie case has been set forth against any of the independent claims.

In the Final Office Action at page 12, in the Response to Amendments section, the Examiner relied upon yet another portion of Mora et al. as allegedly corresponding to the recited automatic forwarding limitation.

In particular, in that section of the Final Office Action, the Examiner cited Mora et al. at col. 7, lines 43-47, which reads:

“Methodology documents whose status has been changed to Pending Approval have a pre-programmed feature for automatically obtaining approval. Specifically, a pre-programmed Request Signatures button may appear in a Document Approval section of a Methodology document. If a user activates this button, the notebook process creates a Signature Request document that is sent to the required signatories.”

Once again, this citation of Mora et al. does not contain any teaching relating to the claimed approval *hierarchy*. At best, it shows that activation of a button by a user sends a signature request to required signatories, without any indication of any hierarchy among those signatories. Further, this portion of Mora et al. neither teaches nor suggests the recited automatic forwarding of a notice once a previous entity in the approval hierarchy has approved the electronic document.

In neither the portion of Mora et al. cited against the recited automatic forwarding limitation nor the portions cited against the identifying step is it taught that such approvals are hierarchical. Nor is there any discussion of “entities” within an approval hierarchy, as required by the independent claims. For at least this additional reason, no prima facie case of anticipation has been set forth as against the independent claims.

In the continuation sheet appended to the Advisory Action dated June 21, 2004, the Examiner added yet a different explanation as to which structure in Mora et al. corresponds to the recited approval hierarchy. In particular, in the continuation sheet, the position was taken by the Examiner that the recited approval hierarchy is taught in Mora et al. by the existence of a high-level document, a division-level document and project assignments, shown in figure 3. The Examiner stated:

Applicant argues that Mora does not teach an approval hierarchy. However, in figure 3, Mora teaches high-level documents, division-level documents and assignments, wherein high level and division-level are multiple levels. Mora also teaches getting an approval signature on documents (column 7, lines 48 - 52). Therefore, Mora teaches getting documents approved where the documents are at different levels.

The Examiner appears to be confusing the concept of levels, *per se*, with the claimed entities which comprise an approval hierarchy. In Figure 3, Mora is simply illustrating that its system stores *documents* of different levels. This is not the same as “entities which comprise an approval hierarchy.” If the documents themselves were deemed to be the recited entities, such a reading would be inconsistent with the automatic forwarding limitation, in which a notice requesting

approval of the at least one electronic document is automatically forwarded to a successive one of the entities in the approval hierarchy upon approval of the at least one electronic document by a previous entity in the approval hierarchy. A notice requesting approval of a document would not be sent to a document.

The recitation of entities that comprise an approval hierarchy cannot be met by a hierarchy of documents, for at least the reasons discussed in the foregoing paragraph. In fact, nothing identified in the continuation sheet of the Advisory Action meets the feature of the recited automatic forwarding, which requires, among other things, that there be entities in an approval hierarchy and that a notice requesting approval is forwarded to a successive one of those entities.

As has been outlined above, the Final Office Action and the continuation sheet of the Advisory Action have failed to identify structure in Mora et al. that teaches each and every feature of the independent claims, in the same arrangement as in those claims. Further, as has been discussed in the foregoing, Mora et al.'s teachings have been applied inconsistently to different limitations of the claim and, in any event, do not teach each feature, for at least the reasons set forth above.

Such inconsistent, and ever-changing, allegations of correspondence between the teachings of Mora et al. are not remotely sufficient to sustain an anticipation rejection of independent claim 1, or of independent claims 35 and 36. For at least this reason, no prima facie case of anticipation has been established against any of the independent claims.

Independent claims 1, 35 and 36 each recite limitations not anticipated by Mora et al., the only reference cited against those claims. Because each of the

independent claims are patentable, the Office should also allow their dependent claims as well. Further, Webber et al. is not believed to remedy the above-mentioned deficiencies of Mora et al. as against the independent claims.

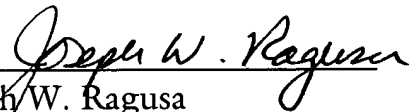
For the reasons discussed above, the Examiner has failed to set forth a prima facie case of anticipation in the present application. As such, Appellants respectfully submit that the pending claims are not anticipated in light of the cited reference and are in condition for immediate allowance.

IX. CLAIMS INVOLVED IN THE APPEAL

A copy of the claims involved in the present appeal is attached hereto as Appendix A.

Dated: August 24, 2004

Respectfully submitted,

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APPENDIX A

Claims Involved in the Appeal of Application Serial No. 09/705,486:

1. (Original) A method for automating the management of a project, the method comprising the steps of:
 - generating at least one electronic document associated with the project;
 - identifying entities that comprise an approval hierarchy; and
 - automatically forwarding a notice requesting approval of the at least one electronic document to a successive one of the entities in the approval hierarchy upon approval of the at least one electronic document by a previous entity in the approval hierarchy.
2. (Original) The method as recited in claim 1, the method further comprising the steps of:
 - one of the entities in the approval process requesting clarification with respect to the at least one electronic document; and
 - automatically forwarding the at least one electronic document to one of a previous entity in the approval hierarchy and the document originator for the requested clarification.
3. (Original) The method as recited in claim 2, the method further comprising the steps of:
 - opening an electronic notebook associated with the at least one electronic document;
 - generating the requested clarification in the electronic notebook; and
 - forwarding the at least one electronic document back to the entity that requested the clarification.

4. (Original) The method as recited in claim 1, the method further comprising the steps of:

one of the entities in the approval process disapproving the at least one electronic document; and

automatically forwarding the at least one electronic document to one of a previous entity in the approval hierarchy and the document originator.

5. (Original) The method as recited in claim 1, the method further comprising the step of:

determining if a monetary value associated with the at least one electronic document requires that at least one electronic document obtain the approval of a higher level entity in the approval hierarchy.

6. (Original) The method as recited in claim 1, the method further comprising the step of temporarily substituting a substitute entity for one of the entities in the approval hierarchy.

7. (Original) The method as recited in claim 1, further comprising the step of maintaining the at least one electronic document in a central storage location to which the entities in the approval hierarchy can access, review and approve the at least one electronic document.

8. (Original) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the at least one electronic document is a request for assistance that initiates the project.

9. (Original) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the at least one electronic document is a contract.

10. (Original) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the at least one electronic document is a commitment with respect to a vendor on the project.

11. (Original) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the at least one electronic document is a bid.

12. (Original) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the at least one electronic document is a funding document that contains the funding for the project.

13. (Original) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the at least one electronic document is a purchase order.

14. (Original) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the at least one electronic document is a change order.

15. (Original) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the at least one electronic document is an invoice approval document.

16. (Original) The method as recited in claim 1, further comprising the step of attaching a digital signature to the at least one electronic document in order to indicate the approval of an entity in the approval hierarchy.

17. (Original) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the electronic document is generated by a client and wherein the approval hierarchy is a client approval hierarchy, the method further comprising the steps of:

identifying project management entities that comprise a project management approval hierarchy; and

automatically forwarding a notice requesting approval of the at least one electronic document to a successive one of the project management entities in the project management approval hierarchy upon approval of the at least one electronic document by a previous project management entity in the project management approval hierarchy.

18. (Original) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein there are a plurality of electronic documents, the method further comprising the steps of:
organizing the plurality of electronic documents into folders; and
providing a plurality of views of the plurality of electronic documents.

19. (Original) The method as recited in claim 1, further comprising the steps of:
establishing a user profile for each user participating in the method;
and
limiting a user's access to the at least one electronic document based on a parameter in the user profile.

20. (Original) The method as recited in claim 1, further comprising the step of generating an electronic workflow list for a user that contains a list of electronic documents that require an action by the user.

21. (Original) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the step of automatically forwarding the notice further comprises forwarding the notice on an intranet.

22. (Original) The method as recited in claim 1, further comprising the steps of:
generating a budget for the project; and
generating a funding document using the budget, wherein the at least one electronic document is the funding document.

23. (Original) The method as recited in claim 22, wherein the step of generating the budget further comprises the steps of:
selecting one of a plurality of pre-existing templates for the budget, the selected template containing a plurality of selectable budget items; and

selecting at least one of the selectable budget items.

24. (Original) The method as recited in claim 23, wherein the step of selecting the at least one of the selectable budget items further comprises the step of using a drag and drop method.

25. (Original) The method as recited in claim 1, further comprising the step of attaching at least one other electronic file to the at least one electronic document.

26. (Original) The method as recited in claim 25, wherein the at least one other electronic file is a second electronic document.

27. (Original) The method as recited in claim 26, further comprising the step of generating the second electronic document from an original paper document.

28. (Original) The method as recited in claim 25, wherein the at least one other electronic file is an image file.

29. (Original) The method as recited in claim 25, wherein the at least one other electronic file is a spreadsheet file.

30. (Original) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein there are a plurality of electronic documents associated with the project, and wherein at least a subset of the plurality of electronic documents are related to financial transactions, the method further comprising:

performing a closeout operation with respect to the electronic documents, wherein the closeout determines which, if any, of the electronic documents are related to incomplete financial transaction.

31. (Original) The method as recited in claim 30, wherein the project has not been completed, the step of performing the closeout further

comprises performing a partial closeout, wherein the partial closeout closes out electronic documents related to completed financial transactions.

32. (Original) The method as recited in claim 30, wherein the project has been completed, the step of performing the closeout further comprises performing a full closeout, wherein the full closeout closes out all electronic documents related to financial transactions.

33. (Original) The method as recited in claim 30, wherein the step of performing the closeout further comprises transferring a balance of a completed financial transaction to a General Ledger account.

34. (Original) The method as recited in claim 30, wherein the step of performing the closeout is not performed until the project has been 80% completed.

35. (Original) A method for automating the management of a project, the method comprising the steps of:
generating at least one electronic document associated with the project;
identifying entities that comprise an approval hierarchy;
automatically forwarding a notice requesting approval of the at least one electronic document to a successive one of the entities in the approval hierarchy upon approval of the at least one electronic document by a previous entity in the approval hierarchy;

a first one of the entities in the approval process requesting clarification with respect to the at least one electronic document;

automatically forwarding the at least one electronic document to one of a previous entity in the approval hierarchy and the document originator for the requested clarification;

second one of the entities in the approval process disapproving the at least one electronic document; and

automatically forwarding the at least one electronic document to one of the previous entity in the approval hierarchy and the document originator.

36. (Original) A system for automating the management of a project, the system comprising:

a network;

a project manager workstation coupled to the network;

at least one client workstation coupled to the network, wherein the at least one client workstation is used to identify entities that comprise an approval hierarchy;

a database server coupled to the network, the database server containing at least one electronic document associated with the project;

a workflow server coupled to the network wherein the workflow server automatically forwards a notice requesting approval of the at least one electronic document to a successive one of the entities in the approval hierarchy upon approval of the at least one electronic document by a previous entity in the approval hierarchy.

37. (Original) The system as recited in claim 36, wherein one of the entities in the approval process requesting clarification with respect to the at least one electronic document; and

wherein the workflow server automatically forwards the at least one electronic document to one of a previous entity in the approval hierarchy and the document originator for the requested clarification.

38. (Original) The system as recited in claim 37, the system further comprising:

an electronic notebook associated with the at least one electronic document, wherein the requested clarification is generating in the electronic notebook, and wherein the at least one electronic document is forwarded back to the entity that requested the clarification.

39. (Original) The system as recited in claim 36, wherein one of the entities in the approval process disapproves the at least one electronic document, and

wherein the workflow server automatically forwards the at least one electronic document to one of a previous entity in the approval hierarchy and the document originator.

40. (Original) The system as recited in claim 36, wherein the workflow server determines if a monetary value associated with the at least one electronic document stored in the database server requires that at least one electronic document obtain the approval of a higher level entity in the approval hierarchy.

41. (Original) The system as recited in claim 36, wherein a substitute entity is temporarily substituted for one of the entities in the approval hierarchy.

42. (Original) The system as recited in claim 36, the system further comprising:

a central storage location coupled to the database server, wherein the at least one electronic document is stored in the central storage location and

wherein the entities in the approval hierarchy can access, review and approve the at least one electronic document through the database server.

43. (Original) The system as recited in claim 36, wherein the at least one electronic document is a request for assistance that initiates the project.

44. (Original) The system as recited in claim 36, wherein the at least one electronic document is a contract.

45. (Original) The system as recited in claim 36, wherein the at least one electronic document is a commitment with respect to a vendor on the project.

46. (Original) The system as recited in claim 36, wherein the at least one electronic document is a bid.

47. (Original) The system as recited in claim 36, wherein the at least one electronic document is a funding document that contains the funding for the project.

48. (Original) The system as recited in claim 36, wherein the at least one electronic document is a purchase order.

49. (Original) The system as recited in claim 36, wherein the at least one electronic document is a change order.

50. (Original) The system as recited in claim 36, wherein the at least one electronic document is an invoice approval document.

51. (Original) The system as recited in claim 36, the system further comprising:

a digital signature attached to the at least one electronic document in order to indicate the approval of an entity in the approval hierarchy.

52. (Original) The system as recited in claim 36, wherein there are a plurality of electronic documents, the system further comprising:

a plurality of folders in which the plurality of electronic documents are organized.

53. (Original) The system as recited in claim 36, the system further comprising:

a user profile for each user participating in the system, wherein a user's access to the at least one electronic document is limited based on a parameter in the user profile.

54. (Original) The system as recited in claim 36, the system further comprising:

an electronic workflow list maintained in the workflow server for a user, the workflow list containing a list of electronic documents that require an action by the user.

55. (Original) The system as recited in claim 36, wherein the notice forwarded on the network.

56. (Original) The system as recited in claim 55, wherein the network is an intranet.

57. (Original) The system as recited in claim 55, wherein the network is the Internet.

58. (Currently amended) The system as recited in claim 56, the system further comprising:

a budget for the project stored on the database server; and

a funding document stored on the database server, wherein the funding document is generated using the budget, and wherein the at least one electronic document is the funding document.

59. (Currently amended) The system as recited in claim 58, the system further comprising:

a plurality of pre-existing templates stored on the database server, the plurality of pre-existing templates being used for the generation of the budget, each of the plurality of pre-existing templates containing a plurality of selectable budget items.

60. (Currently amended) The system as recited in claim 36, the system further comprising at least one other electronic file attached to the at least one electronic document.

61. (Currently amended) The system as recited in claim 60, wherein the at least one other electronic file is a second electronic document.

62. (Currently amended) The system as recited in claim 61, wherein the second electronic document is generated from an original paper document.

63. (Currently amended) The system as recited in claim 61, wherein the at least one other electronic file is an image file.

64. (Currently amended) The system as recited in claim 61, wherein the at least one other electronic file is a spreadsheet file.

65. (Currently amended) The system as recited in claim 1, wherein there are a plurality of electronic documents associated with the project, and wherein at least a subset of the plurality of electronic documents are related to financial transactions, the system further comprising:

a general ledger account stored on the database server, the workflow server performing a closeout operation with respect to the electronic documents, wherein the closeout operation transfers completed financial transactions to the general ledger.

66. (Currently amended) The system as recited in claim 36, wherein the network is a corporate intranet, the system further comprising:

a firewall coupled to the corporate intranet and coupled to an external network; and

a vendor workstation coupled to the corporate intranet through the external network and the firewall.

67. (Currently amended) The system as recited in claim 66 wherein the external network is the Internet.